**ARRA Special Education Needs Assessment**
**Stakeholders Meeting**
**4/11/11**
**Meeting Notes**

**In attendance:** Carolyn McConnell, Judy Werner, Mary Bush, Myranda Marsh, Ruben Duenas, Pat Dwyer, Kaye Ragland, Renee Harvey, Amy Hanreddy, Nancy Franklin, Jody Molodow, Jose Cole-Gutierrez, Toby Bornstein, Yvette King-Berg, Joaquin Hernandez, Jennifer Lockwood, Judy Miranda, Richard Covey, Amy Berfield, Sandy Park, Gina Plate
Presenters: Alice Parker, Christopher Cross, Ginger Adams Simon, Dale Spears

**Presentation of Findings**

After introductions and an overview of the design and methodology for the needs assessment, Alice Parker presented some of the key findings in the report.

Compliance
This is mostly good news. Charter schools are doing great with Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) with 85% of students spending 80% or more of their day in general ed classes. But, we need to look at that other 20% of their day and what is happening there. Special Day Classes are not the answer. Research has shown us that this is not an effective model. Also, general education teachers need more training in differentiating their instruction to meet students where they are and address the various learning modalities in their classrooms.

The Charter schools in the study look strong in the area of transition services as well where they area appear to be out performing the district in providing transition services to students. This is a testament to the strong college-ready emphasis on Charter campuses.

Vision Articulation and Communication
The study found that at various levels of the system, there lacked a clearly stated vision for special education. This was true both between the district, and Charter Schools and within the charter schools themselves. Some of this is attributed to communication systems and some to leadership turnover or inexperience with these issues. Delivery of quality service to SWDs in an intentional way, rather than an informal is the goal. Some good examples do exist in the system which are noted in the report.

Teaching and Learning- Strong practices in gen ed make all the difference. The study found many good examples of quality, explicit and standards-based instruction, but many need help with differentiation strategies, particularly when dealing with students well-below grade level or students with special needs. Recommendations to strengthen this area are included in the report.

Use of Assistive and other Technologies
The report found little to no use or inconsistent use of assistive technologies in most sites observed. Recommendations to strengthen this area are included in the report.

A vision for a new SELPA
The report shared a long list of issues and concerns raised about the new SELPA that were brought up in interviews and focus groups. Many of these issues have been resolved since these conversations occurred, but the report recommends a facilitated session in June to continue to work on these issues based on the findings of the needs assessment.

Community and Culture
The report found this to be a strength area for all Charters. How can we leverage this to improve supports for SWDs?

Professional Development and Collaboration
The report found many special educators working in isolation from one another and charter schools by their very nature, working independently from one another. This prevents the spread of best practices and the sharing of tools and resources that could be beneficial to students and teachers. The report offers recommendations for building communities on practice for charter educators, both live and online.

Data Management
The report found that Welligent has many challenges associated with it. Making it work and improving efficiencies, however, is essential for quality data and compliance management. Recommendations include the production of a users guide.

**Discussion**

The group felt that the major themes presented in the report were appropriate and on target. A few comments followed:

- Will there be recommendations for parent education? What did we hear from them?
- Coaching- How can we help to develop coaching models around all of these issues?
- 85% slide of kids with IEPs- Can we contextualize with types of SDs compared with LAUSD?
- How do you get kids who are well-below grade up to grade level? We need help with this.
- Providing differentiation without segregation.
- Technology can help with PD and collaboration

- LAUSD is happy to hear concerns accurately expressed reflected in the report and is looking forward to working together

- Behavior supports are a big issue for a lot of schools. This should really be part of a three-pronged subject focus for PD: Literacy + Math + Behavior

## Recommendations

The recommendations based on these findings fall into three categories:
1) Networks for PD and Communities of Practice; 2) SELPA Planning; 3) Data Systems and Management

### Networks for PD and Communities of Practice
- Will begin with a Summit in July or August on a Fri-Sat-Sun
- Topics will include: Reading/literacy, Math, behavior, RTi, autism, assistive technologies
- There will be a parent strand
- Charters will have the opportunity to showcase their programs (there will be a call for presenters issued)
- School participation will be differentiated based on their needs of work utilizing pre- and –post survey instruments
- Data-driven practice
- A technology platform (eg. www.myboe.org) will be utilized to support CoPs and serve as a repository for tools and resources

### Hiring Coaches
To support the learning begun at the summit in a more job-embedded way, funds will be used to hire coaches (12 people) to go into schools and work with teachers on the job. The hope is to get these coaches into schools as soon as possible.

### SELPA Planning
We need to determine how far along we are with addressing the most critical issues raised in the report. SELPA should have an 18 month to two year plan for PD that is based on the findings of this report and data from schools.

One stakeholder asked if the SELPA could start a mentoring program where experienced educators and charter leaders could mentor those who are newer to their schools or to the world of special education?

### Data Management
Welligent- Group was pleased with the recommendation for a users guide. Another recommendation in the report was to create a forum for user groups

which was also well received. Jody Molodow commented that the Welligent people at the district are really working on improving the system.

Data driven decision making was also noted in the report as a challenge area. Once good data is in the hands of educators, they need to know how to unpack it. This will be a strand at the summit.

Some models to consider are:
- MAPS from Missouri
- "School-wide positive behavior intervention and supports" Robert Horner, University of Oregon

**Extended School Year (ESY)**
Part of the needs assessment contract included looking at ESY models for the Charters so that all students with ESY on their IEPs can be served. We will be looking at these data this week. We would want to start July 5 and 6. Law requires a minimum of 20 days. Templates of letters for parents, teachers, etc. will be sent to schools soon.

State will reimburse for ESY per pupil as well. ARRA money is for set up of the program. Cross & Joftus has contracted with (name) from (XXX) to head up this effort. We will get the rules from him and send them to you.

### Discussion

Question: What is the budget for these recommendations?
Answer: approximately $ 1.9 Million. Cross and Joftus will send everything again (what are we sending?). CCSA website now has a Special Ed page and will make an ARRA page in order to provide easily accessible information on the project.

Question: We need to prioritize these recommendations and our spending. What role will this group have in that process? Answer: We want your input. Please send an email to Alice and Ginger (alice@edstrategies.net, ginger@edstrategies.net) by **April 20th** with the following:

1. Your prioritized list of recommendations
2. Any corrections for the report
3. Your interest in serving on a working group to help plan for:
    i) The Summit and on-Going PD Planning
    ii) Shared Resources and Delivery Models
    iii) Technology platform for resources and communities

### Meetings and Presentations

- Final report and recommendations to be presented to CCSA membership at a meeting on **Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>** at Fenton from 2-4 p.m.
- Working groups will need to meet by phone prior to that meeting
- We will ask some of you to present recommendations and plans and ask you to get your peers to come to the meeting
- The next stakeholder meeting will be in May (TBD).